

MINUTES
Alaska Resource Advisory Council Meeting
Glennallen Field Office (GFO) ~ Glennallen, AK
April 7, 2005

Thursday, April 7, 2005

Council members present:

Tom Crafford, Chair
Phil Driver
Sandra Key
Suzanne McCarthy
Susan Olsen
David van den Berg
Teresa Imm
June McAtee
Jim Posey

BLM representatives present:

Henri Bisson, State Director
Ramone McCoy, Glennallen Field Office
Gary Reimer, Anchorage Field Office
Bob Schneider, Northern Field Office
Dave Mushovic, State Office
Dave Howell, State Office
Brad England, Special Agent in Charge
Dave Yokel, Northern Field Office
Edward Bovy, State Office
John Rego, Glennallen Field Office
John Payne, State Office
Scott Guyer, State Office
Jim Ducker, State Office
Joe Ribar, Alaska Fire Service

Danielle Allen, State Office, RAC coordinator
Wendy Longtin, State Office, recorder

Public present:

Melissa Blair, Alaska Coalition
Ruth McHenry, Copper Country Alliance
Cliff Eames
Rex A. Okakok Sr., North Slope Borough Planning Department
Paul Boos

Council members absent: Randy Frank, Larry Taylor, Greg Beischer, Charlie Boddy, Keith Tryck (*mailed meeting packets 4/15/05*)

*** Handouts mentioned in the minutes are available to the public upon request. Please contact RAC coordinator Danielle Allen, 907-271-3335 or danielle_allen@ak.blm.gov.**

Chair Tom Crafford called the meeting to order at 9 a.m.

Glennallen Field Office (GFO) Manager Ramone McCoy welcomed council members to the new field office building, which was dedicated in October, and noted that this was the council's first meeting at the Glennallen Field Office.

State Director's Update

BLM-Alaska State Director Henri Bisson briefed the council on current BLM-Alaska issues including:

- **J.W. Dalton Well Cleanup:** Expect to be done by the end of April. The Secretary signed off on \$7.5 million for legacy well cleanup projects, \$5 million of which will go for the J.W. Dalton cleanup. Three other legacy wells, including one near Teshekpuk Lake, are slated for cleanup.
- **Increased Funding Requests:** Bisson was in Washington, D.C., recently to deliver briefings to encourage funding for National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska resource management plans, the North Slope Science Initiative and legacy well cleanups. No other BLM states were allowed overtarget requests.
- **Northeast National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Plan:** Environmental groups filed a lawsuit the last week in March prior to a Record of Decision (ROD), but because of legislation the plaintiffs had to file at that time. No date has been set for the Secretary to sign the ROD. The Secretary and the BLM are continuing discussions with the North Slope Borough and Mayor George Ahmaogak, who submitted a letter critical of the Northeast plan. BLM is considering changes to provide greater subsistence resource protection, and is developing a research study proposal on molting geese near Teshekpuk Lake to be incorporated in the ROD. Bisson is meeting with Ducks Unlimited and the North Slope Borough the week of April 4 to discuss the plan.
- **Northwest National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Plan:** The U.S. District Court's ruling in favor of the government in January was appealed to the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals. BLM is filing briefs to prepare for a hearing in September.
- **Recordable Disclaimers of Interest:** The Porcupine River report has been finalized and the decision is in Washington for review and approval. The Porcupine River is within the exterior boundaries of the Arctic and Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuges.
- **Congressional Visit to North Slope:** Bisson accompanied Sen. Murkowski, Interior Secretary Gale Norton and others during the congressional visit to the North Slope in early March. During a meeting in Kaktovik, questions about BLM conveyance procedures and Native allotments were raised. Bisson explained that BLM had started working on Native allotments from west to east, and 54 of Kaktovik-area allotment applications were rejected in courts with not much hope of being reinstated. Bisson signed off on 3 allotments and BLM is surveying 24 more allotments this summer. BLM is addressing some access issues concerning survey because 6 allotments lie within the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Helicopters are not normally used in designated wildlife areas, but due to safety issues BLM is working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to use them for survey purposes.
- **Gas Storage in Kenai National Wildlife Refuge:** Unocal has asked for BLM's permission to take natural gas from outside the refuge and store it in the refuge in existing

facilities. Unocal's current lease agreements in the refuge are for exploration and production of oil and gas only, as well as storing some gas found in the refuge. Since gas would come from outside sources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the BLM consider this project to be a separate use requiring approval. USFWS has given its approval. The payment goes to the U.S. Treasury.

Susan Olsen inquired about the North Slope Borough letter which was critical of the Northeast plan and asked why these issues weren't addressed in the planning stages.

Bisson replied that there was concern about the issues raised by the North Slope Borough throughout the planning process and an undercurrent of opposition to the plan. The North Slope Borough opposed the draft plan, so BLM came up with a different strategy to address issues concerning the Teshekpuk Lake area. Bisson stated that he met with Mayor Ahmaogak in December and BLM's Northern Field Officer Manager Bob Schneider met with the borough planner. Bisson said that there was positive reaction to the proposal and therefore, BLM was surprised by the criticism. BLM's perspective is that the agency needs to make a balanced decision on what to do with federal lands, which includes leasing in a respectable manner and also respecting what goes on in the North Slope communities. Bisson stated that the area is mandated for a petroleum reserve not a wildlife area and a large potential of oil is at stake. Someone could argue that what BLM has come up with is a brand new alternative, but in fact, it's between the best- and worst-case scenarios within the range of alternatives.

The council reviewed and accepted the meeting agenda as written.

The council approved minutes of the Feb. 8-9, 2005, RAC meeting with a date change on p. 8, first paragraph, should be Dec. 2004 instead of 2005.

Field Manager Updates

Bob Schneider, Northern Field Office (NFO)

- Schneider briefed the council on some Conoco Philips' activity on the North Slope and gave additional information about the J.W. Dalton well cleanup.
- **SB85 Dalton Highway Corridor:** Schneider handed out Sen. Ralph Seekins' opinion piece (*Fairbanks Daily News Miner*, April 5, 2005) regarding Senate Bill 85, which proposes removing the state statute prohibiting off-road vehicles along the Dalton Highway corridor north of the Yukon River, which affects state and federal lands. Sen. Seekins called Schneider on Friday afternoon to discuss the issue. If Seekins' bill passes, the law would allow BLM and the state 12 months to develop an OHV plan for the corridor. Council members asked about the criteria being considered for the plan and if Federal and State funds are being set aside to manage the influx of OHV users. Schneider responded that agencies could close portions of the corridor to OHV use and limit access at certain times. He said funding is being considered for implementing an OHV-use plan if the Seekins' bill passes. Sandra Key expressed concern that this would open the Dalton corridor to the most unconscientious users and enforcement would be a

problem. David van den Berg said he spoke to Roger Delaney, natural resource specialist at NFO, and felt confident that BLM could handle this issue if the bill passes. Schneider added that it would be important to incorporate a plan to educate potential users. Van den Berg asked if the BLM had weighed in on this bill last year. Schneider said that the BLM had voiced concerns about not having enough time to implement the plan.

- **Mushroom Bumper Crop:** After last season's record fires, mushrooms (mostly morels) are thriving on the burned land which means this year will bring an influx of mushroom pickers. BLM has been meeting with Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) concerning reciprocal commercial permits so pickers only need one permit for both state and federal lands. Permits are not site specific. Funds generated from commercial permits will be split between federal and state agencies based on acreage burned (estimated at 55% state/45% federal). The picking season will start in June and could last 2 to 3 seasons. There are no specifics on income potential other than the agencies will calculate permits using a fair market value of .20/pound.
- **Kobuk/Seward Resource Management Plan:** Lead planner Jeanie Cole is working on alternatives and will discuss options with Gary Reimer, AFO manger, and also decide how to involve the RAC in the planning process. NFO consulted with Raymond Stoney of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd working group to identify 13 communities for scoping meetings.

Gary Reimer, Anchorage Field Office (AFO)

- Reimer handed out an AFO update and briefed the council on the Bay and Ring of Fire Resource Management Plans and BLM's participation in the Iditarod sled dog race.

Ramone McCoy, Glennallen Field Office (GFO)

- McCoy handed out a GFO update and invited the council to view the completed Ahtna place names map, and a map of Arctic Man activities for Friday's field trip.
- **Heli-Mushing:** Susan Olsen mentioned that she was impressed with the BLM's quick response to Era's heli-mushing proposal. McCoy said there were community concerns and Era opted to pull their application.
- **Tangle Lakes Lodge Acquisition:** Henri Bisson began a discussion about the status of the BLM acquiring the Tangle Lakes Lodge as a visitor center for nearby Delta Wild and Scenic River Corridor and the Tangle Lakes Archaeological District (Denali Highway). BLM doesn't have funds to purchase the lodge and Bisson advised that the owner should pursue a willing buyer if he needs to sell. A recent public meeting in Paxson garnered mostly opposition to BLM purchasing the lodge. However, Bisson said talking about the acquisition was a good thing because it started a discussion about managing a visitor center along the Denali Highway. Bisson said that reaching agreements on land patterns would be priority and then BLM could possibly work on a visitor center partnership with the state.
- **East Alaska Resource Management Plan:** Suzanne McCarthy inquired about the State of Alaska's utility corridor request mentioned in the GFO handout. Bisson said he sent a letter to the governor to identify the state's priorities. BLM needs to identify the state's proposal in

one of alternatives, but not necessarily the preferred alternative. Bisson encouraged people to submit substantive comments about the plan.

Susan Olsen asked Bisson about the status of the RAC's recommendations for the recreation RAC. Bisson stated that he had sent the recommendations on to Washington but hasn't heard back yet.

10:30 a.m. BREAK

D1 Withdrawal Lands – Section 207 Report

Dave Mushovic, realty specialist, BLM Alaska State Office

Mushovic gave the background of d-1 withdrawals and displayed preliminary maps of withdrawals inside Conservation System Units (CSU) and withdrawals outside CSUs. Mushovic handed out a briefing paper and stated that field office reviews of resource concerns had been completed. The report team is analyzing timelines and tasks. The BLM has had briefings with the USFWS and the Forest Service, and will brief the National Park Service. Mushovic explained that BLM is looking to divide the state into 12 areas to facilitate the review of all d-1 withdrawals. The BLM is working on a draft communication plan and finalizing maps for distribution. Mushovic stressed that this is a report only and there is no BLM action pending and thus no National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements.

The council wants copies of the maps showing withdrawals inside/outside CSUs. Mushovic explained that the maps are still in the development phase and cannot be released at this time.

Mushovic discussed the effect of lifting PLOs on CSUs, which in most cases would be negligible since the lands would still be segregated by remaining withdrawals or require a specific agency administrative action before they could be opened. The BLM will solicit recommendations from other agencies, but otherwise defer to their administrative processes.

David van den Berg inquired about d-1 withdrawals in the proposed Yukon Flats exchange (Northern Doyon area). Mushovic was not familiar with the details of the exchange proposal, but after consulting the maps it appeared that there were some d-1 withdrawals in the area. If there are any lands involved within the wildlife refuge, then there would likely be some d-1 withdrawals.

June McAtee inquired what or how would 14(h)(1) selections be affected within CSUs?

Mushovic explained that the same issue was raised during the USFWS briefing. Essentially most of these lands are already available for selection in recommendations to Congress prior to Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). Mushovic will refer the question to Susan Lavin at the State Office. *(Since the meeting, Linda Resseguie and Susan Lavin have followed up on this question with McAtee. McAtee said that she had heard early in her career at Calista that certain 14(h)(1)s were adversely affected by 17(d)(1) withdrawals. But she also said that she had no specific examples in mind and did not need us to follow up on the issue. McAtee will*

contact Ken Pratt, BIA's ANCSA rep on cemetery/historical site 14(h)(1) applications, as a sort of institutional memory on the topic of past Calista 14(h)(1) rejections. If, as a result of that contact, she needs additional information, she will contact the BLM.)

Susan Olsen said that the report is an important work item for the RAC workgroup. Bisson discussed several options where the RAC could become involved such as reviewing the public information package, identifying sensitive communities where the RAC become involved in getting information out, making statements, reviewing public comments, and reviewing draft reports. Mushovic added that since the report doesn't require the NEPA process, the team isn't planning for public meetings unless requests are made. Mailing lists, newspaper and radio announcements and advertising, public service announcements will be used to get the word out. However, the team is willing to meet with any organizations regarding the report. Bisson encouraged council members to submit comments to the BLM before the end of the public comment period. The BLM will also respond to any requests for briefings or meetings as appropriate. Bisson and council members concluded that the RAC workgroup should be involved with the project by reviewing the public information packet prior to its June 1 release, meeting with the team to review and discuss public comments, and reviewing the draft report.

Research and Monitoring Team (RMT) National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska

Dave Yokel, wildlife biologist, BLM Northern Field Office

Yokel provided a briefing paper and gave a PowerPoint presentation of the RMT's history and the 7-step development of a monitoring plan for the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska. Yokel said the RMT's plan focuses on the effectiveness of mitigation measures (monitoring), not compliance. Currently, the RMT is discussing the option of using contractors to assume the work and procure additional responsibilities. Yokel explained that monitoring cost estimates are very rough. All research generated through this project is available to any agency.

Henri Bisson informed the council that during his trip to Washington, D.C., he asked for \$2.25 million in RMT and NSSI funding and requested estimated additional funding to gradually expand the North Slope research and monitoring funding level to about \$20 million/year over the next few years. The state is also working to help get RMT/NSSI funding, but in the meantime, the overtarget request will go forward. Bisson stressed that this project is something we HAVE to do. Agencies need to document what actions they're taking or be taken to court.

The council voted to draft a resolution to the Secretary supporting the RMT's work. Susan Olsen, Tom Crafford and Sandra Key will develop verbiage and circulate the resolution for council member's approval, and then forward it to Henri Bisson to forward to the Secretary.

LUNCH 11:45 a.m.

The meeting resumed with public comment at 1 pm.

Ruth McHenry, Copper Country Alliance (CCA)

McHenry provided a copy of a letter she had sent to GFO field manager Ramone McCoy in March stating the concerns CCA had regarding the heliski environmental assessment. She expressed concern that quiet recreationists' rights are not being respected. For example, she stated there's no place in the Glennallen district where summer OHV is restricted except the Tangle Lakes area. Fairness demands that some lands be set aside for quiet use. The Copper Country Alliance supports the conservation alternative for the East Alaska Resource Management Plan and further, wants to see quiet-use rights reflected in all management plans. McHenry encouraged the RAC to support fair use for all users.

Cliff Eames, Copper Valley resident

Eames moved to the Kenny Lake area from Anchorage last year and recreates in the Copper Valley area. He is retired from the Alaska Center for the Environment and is involved with the Alaska Quiet Rights and Copper Country Alliance. He reiterated that motorized recreation is one of the most important issues facing land management agencies today and stressed that not setting aside areas for non-motorized use is not fair to quiet recreationists and subsistence users. Eames said it seems that there isn't recognition of the impacts caused by motorized recreationists -- not to mention that they displace non-motorized users. Eames encouraged the RAC to ensure the BLM fulfills its multiple-use mission, which he doesn't believe is happening since motorized recreationists are allowed more use areas than non-motorized users.

Rex Okakok Sr., North Slope Borough (NSB)

The chair introduced a letter to the RAC from Okakok, NSB planning director, which addressed similar concerns regarding National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska development that were included in Mayor Ahmaogak's letter to BLM. The letter also mentioned Mayor Ahmaogak's opposition to Sen. Seekins' bill (see previous notes from NFO re. SB85 Dalton Highway corridor).

Paxson Fish & Game Advisory Committee

The chair introduced a letter submitted via fax to the RAC stating the Paxson Fish & Game Advisory Committee's unanimous opposition to the BLM's acquisition of the Tangle Lakes Lodge. Council members agreed that the acquisition was a moot point per Bisson's discussion earlier stating that BLM would not be pursuing this issue.

Village of Yakutat

Skip Ryman, Borough Planner for the city and borough of Yakutat, and Bill Lucy, Salmon Board, called the Glennallen Field Office during the public comment period and spoke with RAC coordinator Danielle Allen regarding the Sec. 207 report and also the East Alaska RMP. Allen recorded notes from the conversation and requested Dave Mushovic, BLM Alaska State Office, follow up on Ryman's call. The following notes are introduced for the record:

Lucy mentioned that the Yakutat Tlingit Tribe was not present, but he asked that they be included in further proceedings. They requested RAC nomination packets.

Ryman's concern was that they heard the BLM was opening lands in their area to oil and gas. The borough needs to be able to comment and would like to see some meetings held in Yakutat. Their main concern is protecting watersheds and fisheries.

In a follow-up call to Ryman, Mushovic told him that concerns about involvement, or the recommendations in the East Alaska RMP, should go to planner Bruce Rogers at GFO. Mushovic explained the difference between the East Alaska RMP effort and the Sec. 207 report to Congress, primarily that the report is a recommendation only and that the BLM is not taking any action to lift withdrawals. He explained that even if the withdrawals were lifted there could be other segregative effects, or there would still be additional administrative actions before leasing is possible. He also explained that there would be a public comment period this summer. Ryman sounded satisfied and had no further questions, but requested that he be included in the public comment process. Ryman also noted that Lucy was out of the country for some time, but he would pass on this information to him and the Yakutat Tlingit Tribe.

END OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

North Slope Science Initiative (NSSI)

John Payne, wildlife biologist, Alaska State Office

- NSSI oversight group meeting is April 21, 1:30 p.m., at BLM's Campbell Creek Science Center in Anchorage. The group includes executive membership from federal, state and local government agencies that have land trust or scientific responsibilities across the North Slope. Agencies will be briefing the group on research and monitoring studies.
- Payne reviewed the original mission of NSSI: to enhance the quality and quantity of scientific information on the North Slope, bring the information together to make better decisions about North Slope activities. The group completed the science advisory committee charter, which is awaiting the Secretary's signature, hopefully by late spring/early summer. There will also be a request for nominations.
- Payne shared positive feedback and support from the Senate Energy Committee, governor's staff, Secretary's science advisory committee, National Association of Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference, and others regarding NSSI. Ken Taylor, NSSI executive director, met with the U.S. Arctic Research Commission to gather information.
- The RAC asked if there were any skeptics of NSSI or the Research and Monitoring Team (RMT). Payne said the Wildlife Society has criticized NSSI and RMT efforts. The society supports the direction of the NSSI and RMT, but is skeptical about whether the groups will succeed.

South National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska

Jim Ducker, environmental program analyst, BLM Alaska State Office

Ducker displayed maps showing South National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Resources and Petroleum Reserve Planning Areas/Colville River Special Area.

- BLM is assessing contractor proposals for the EIS and plans to have a selection by late April.
- Notice of Intent (NOI) to begin scoping has been submitted to BLM's Washington, D.C., office for publication in the Federal Register not before May.
- Project budget for FY06 is \$800,000, which is less than anticipated and will impact the schedule.
- Some issues include:
 - Oil and Gas Development Impacts: Especially on the Western Arctic Caribou Herd and subsistence.
 - Hardrock and Coal: Assembling information and contracting for economic and engineering modeling. Anticipate that the public will raise the issue of its development during scoping.
 - Colville River Management: We will consider designation of a Wild and Scenic River as part of the South plan, as well as setbacks similar to those in Northeast and Northwest. Tiering off of the South plan and the NE and NW plans, we will develop a Colville River Management Plan (CRMP).
- EIS will acknowledge that minerals exist although mining is not presently allowed.
- Henri Bisson indicated that the Northwest plan and the Northeast amendment hold off leasing of lands within the Colville River Special Area and that based upon the findings of the CRMP, the State Director can continue to hold back leasing the area or amend the allocations in the IAPs. Council members asked about designating the area as a National Conservation Area, which is congressionally designated. The plan might mandate some oil and gas leasing as well as recreation value protection. Discussion about Arctic Slope Regional Corp. land ownership in the area and potential land exchanges followed.
- Council members expressed concern about the timing of the Colville River plan. Sandra Key stated that she was concerned about the Colville plan being done after everything was settled in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska plans. She also stated that she was especially hopeful that land exchanges that could benefit management of the Colville would be considered in the South plan.
- Council members with conservation and recreation interests urged that some kind of conservation designation be considered in National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska planning efforts. Some members felt that this seemed fair since minerals were being evaluated in the event that there is legislation. Bisson stated that the BLM is not lobbying for legislation to open the South area for mineral entry.
- Bisson noted that the minerals research, which Joe Kurtak presented at the February RAC meeting, will provide data at the same time we're doing the plan. The research looks to validate the presence or absence, amount, quality, etc. of minerals, and this will play into the planning process. If the research shows that the minerals aren't there, it could help better define our planning approach.
- Bisson stressed that BLM is going to use more of a community-based planning approach by asking the North Slope Borough to be part of the process and engaging many villages dependant on the caribou herd. He foresees more consensus than other Petroleum Reserve plans as a result.
- Tom Crafford asked how the RAC can be involved in this plan. Sandra Key introduced her draft role statement and the RAC agreed to discuss expectations after the break.

3 p.m. BREAK

Reconvened at 3:15 p.m.

RAC Workgroups

- **RAC Role Draft:** Sandra Key introduced a draft role statement for the council's review during earlier discussion about the South National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska plan. Members discussed that the statement should be brief and that meetings with planners will drive the RAC's involvement. Henri Bisson added that the RAC's role in land use plans is highly situational, and he suggested that the workgroups and plan leaders highlight areas in the plans where RAC members can be involved. Key explained that the role statement would be a proactive way to help new RAC members understand what is expected of RAC members and of BLM. Tom Crafford inquired about adopting an official role statement into the workplan and members agreed. Key, Crafford and Olsen will work on verbiage and add a statement to the workplan.
- **Wildland Fire Management (Keith/Randy Suzanne/Larry):** Tom Crafford introduced a wildland fire resolution draft on Keith Tryck's behalf and asked that council members review it and send comments to Crafford and Tryck in preparation for voting at the next meeting. Some council members expressed concern over the tone of the resolution.
- **East Alaska Resource Management Plan (Susan/Suzanne/Sandra):** Susan Olsen requested that RAC members should be on all management plan mailings lists.
- **Outdated Federal Land Segregations/Sec. 207 Report (Greg/Tom/Susan/Randy/Keith/Sandra/June):** RAC members will be involved in the review process per discussion during Sec. 207 report briefing earlier in the day. Dave Mushovic will contact the RAC workgroup and arrange for them to review the public information package.
- **Ring of Fire (Charlie/Sandra/Jim):** Nothing new to report.
- **South National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Integrated Activity Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (Teresa/David/Phil/Sandra/Tom/Susan):** Workgroup members participated in a teleconference earlier in the week and identified five concerns regarding the South plan: 1) prospects of land exchange, 2) adequacy of baseline biological data, 3) timeline, 4) future of RAC liaisons, and 5) likelihood of legislation lifting the mineral closure or designating conservation areas. Henri Bisson stated that there will be no legislative changes until BLM is done with the plan and since the South plan is not a legislative EIS, BLM will not recommend any legislative action. It's possible that Congress could ask BLM to draft legislation. Bob Schneider added that BLM hasn't modified the preplan, but the scope of work and Notice of Intent have been modified to delete any references to potential legislation so as not to confuse the plan's purpose. Schneider agreed to get the scope of work to the RAC workgroup for review.
- **Kobuk/Seward Resource Management Plan (Teresa/Tom/Phil):** Jeanie Cole, NFO, contacted workgroup members to update them on the plan. Members will discuss future RAC involvement with Cole.
- **White Mountains National Recreation Area (Dave/Susan/Charlie):** David van den Berg spoke with Lon Kelly, NFO outdoor rec planner. Scoping will begin April 20. The workgroup requested electronic copies of the preplan. The Environmental Assessment plan amendment will address changes in OHV technology issues.

- **The Bay (June/Greg/~~Evie~~ Sandra):** Pat McClenahan, AFO, has been keeping June McAtee aware of upcoming community meetings. Now that Sandra Key will replace Evie Witten on the workgroup, McAtee will brief Key on the plan status.

Non-Agenda Items

- **RAC Resignations, Nominations:** Evie Witten has resigned from the RAC effective immediately. Randy Frank and Larry Taylor will be resigning at the end of this term. Four other RAC members' terms are up and Bisson asked those members to please consider reapplying by submitting a letter through RAC coordinator Danielle Allen expressing interest in remaining on the council.

**Council members reviewed current workgroup assignments and made the following adjustments in consideration of the recent and upcoming resignations: Frank removed from d-1 lands (adequate representation remains), from fire plan (replace with Suzanne McCarthy); Taylor removed from OHV-use and fire plan (adequate representation remains); Witten removed from the Bay (replace with Sandra Key)*

- Council members requested that each member receive a written or CD copy of the new Land Use Planning Guide.

Bering Glacier Field Agenda

GFO Manager Ramone McCoy briefed the council on the Bering Glacier ecosystem managed by the BLM and reviewed a tentative agenda for the RAC's August 10-12, 2005, field trip to the research camp.

Meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

Briefings continued during dinner at 7 p.m.

Alaska Fire Service

Joe Ribar, fire staff officer, BLM Alaska Fire Service

Ribar briefed the council on the fire program including: staffing and airtanker availability, boundary changes, public affairs specialist position, public comments, the North Star Borough Wildland Fire Commission report, incident management team extensions, Wildland Fire Situation Analysis training sessions, and air quality and smoke management. Ribar provided a briefing booklet following his presentation.

Bisson added that BLM will finalize its cabin protection policy at the next Alaska Leadership Team (ALT) meeting in late April. However, he cautioned that availability of resources (dependent on conditions in the Lower 48) drive suppression capabilities.

Alaska Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) Team

Scott Guyer, natural resource specialist, BLM Alaska State Office

Guyer briefed the council on the BAER interagency team's Burned Area Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Plan from October. The team assessed almost 4.8 million acres of the record-breaking almost 6.5 million acres that burned in Alaska during 2004. A spring BAER team will arrive in June to assess the remaining 1.6 million burned acres.

- Summary of acres burned (only acres assessed): 39% BLM, 33% state, 16% U.S. Fish & Wildlife, 12% Native.
- Stabilization funding lasts one year and is for critical threats to life and property. The \$3.27 million funding for Alaska stabilization expires in September.
- Rehabilitation funding (\$500,000) is used to restore normally functioning ecosystems.
- The report is available online at www.ak.blm.gov and Guyer has CD versions of the report.

CERTIFICATION

This document is a fair and accurate summation of the BLM Alaska Resource Advisory Council meeting of April 7, 2005.

/S/ Tom Crafford

Tom Crafford, RAC Chair

8/10/05

Date